

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

SAB-01 SSO-00 IO-13 SSM-03 EB-07 SCCT-01 ACDA-07 /090 W

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R 210856Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8747

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4767

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLO

SUBJECT: PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM  
BELIEVES SITUATION IN LEBANON WILL WORSEN

1. PRIVATE AMERICAN SOURCE WHO TALKED WITH PNC CHAIRMAN KHALID FAHUM JULY 20 TOLD US THAT FAHUM EXPECTS LEBANESE SITUATION TO WORSEN RATHER THAN IMPROVE IN COMING DAYS. FAHUM SAID ASAD MIRED IN LEBANESE CRISIS. HE COULD HAVE TAKEN BEIRUT MILITARILY FEW WEEKS AGO BUT DECIDED AGAINST THIS COURSE BECAUSE OF PROSPECTS FOR SLAUGHTER ON BOTH SIDES DUE TO EXPECTED STIFF PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED WITH LEBANON; PLO EXCOMM, WHICH SUPPOSED TO MEET EVERY TWO WEEKS, HAD NOT MET FOR SEVEN MONTHS; ARAFAT CALLING THE SHOTS ON HIS OWN.

2. CONCERNING AIR FRANCE HIJACKING, FAHUM ASSERTED THAT ARABS INVOLVED HAD BEEN EXPELLED FROM PFLP YEAR AGO. HE STRESSED THAT PLO WAS AGAINST POLICY OF HIJACKING.

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3. FAHUM SAID HE HOPED TO INCREASE WEST BANK PARTICIPATION IN PNC. HE SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED WEST BANKERS COULD AFFECT THEIR FUTURE BY ORGANIZING THEMSELVES AND PERSISTING IN THEIR RESISTANCE AGAINST ISRAELI OCCUPATION.

4. FAHUM TOLD SOURCE HE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY HE HAD RECEIVED NEITHER PRAISE NOR CRITICISM FROM ANY OTHER ARABS FOR PROPOSAL HE SUBMITTED TWO YEARS AGO FOR LOOSE SYRO-EGYPTIAN-PALESTINIAN CONFEDERATION THAT WOULD PERMIT FORMATION OF JOINT DELEGATION TO ATTEND GENEVA PEACE TALKS.

5. COMMENT: IT IS DEBATABLE JUST HOW MUCH WEIGHT MODERATE VIEWS OF FAHUM CARRY IN PLO COUNCILS, BUT HE APPARENTLY TRYING TO BALANCE HIS CRITICISM OF SYRIANS AND ARAFAT TO MAINTAIN HIS ROLE AS AN ELDER STATESMAN WITHIN PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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